De-colonization in Asia (China) and Africa (Ghana & Kenya)

(i) China:

Background of Problems Facing the Communists in 1949:

- **Agriculture**:
  - After the Chinese Civil War, the Communist Party under Mao Zedong faced issues of widespread poverty, land inequality, and rural instability.
  - The Communist Party began land reforms, redistributing land from landlords to peasants.
  - This process eventually led to the creation of collective farms where peasants worked together under state control.
- **Industry**:
  - **Five-Year Plan (1953):** Modeled after the Soviet Union's plans, it aimed to industrialize China, focusing on heavy industry and infrastructure development.
  - **Soviet Help:** The Soviet Union played a significant role by providing financial aid, technical assistance, and training to China, contributing to the early industrial growth.

The Great Leap Forward (GLF):

- **Objective:** Launched in 1958 by Mao, the GLF aimed to rapidly transform China from an agrarian society to an industrialized nation.
- **Development of Communes**: The government pushed for the formation of large agricultural communes where farming was collectivized.
- **Assessment of the GLF:**
  - **Failures:** The GLF was marked by disastrous policies such as forced collectivization, over-reporting of harvests, and the diversion of resources from agriculture to industry. It resulted in widespread famine and millions of deaths.
  - **Outcome**: The GLF is considered a major failure, leading to a shift in China's policies and the eventual downfall of some key leaders in the Communist Party.

(ii) Ghana: Democracy and Dictatorship (1957-66)

Background to Independence:

- **Pre-Independence**: Ghana (formerly Gold Coast) was a British colony.
- **Independence:** Ghana became the first African nation to gain independence from colonial rule on March 6, 1957.

Nkrumah’s Role:

- **Kwame Nkrumah**: Leader of the Convention People’s Party (CPP) and the main figure in Ghana's independence movement.
- **Policies:** Nkrumah promoted Pan-Africanism, emphasized industrialization, and sought foreign investment to modernize the country. His vision included free education, healthcare, and the establishment of a strong state.

Reasons for Nkrumah's Overthrow (1966):

- **Dictatorship**: Nkrumah's leadership became increasingly authoritarian. He dissolved political opposition and consolidated power in his own hands.
- **Economic Challenges:** Nkrumah's ambitious projects, such as the Akosombo Dam and other infrastructural developments, led to heavy foreign debt and economic instability.
- **External Influence**: There was suspicion of foreign powers, particularly the U.S. and the U.K., who were concerned about his ties to socialism.
- **Overthrow**: In 1966, Nkrumah was overthrown in a coup while he was in China on a state visit.

(iii) Kenya: Conflict and Independence (1947-1964)

Conflict with Whites over Independence:

- **Colonial Kenya**: Kenya was a British colony with a small white settler population that controlled most of the fertile land.
- **African Resistance:** The indigenous population, particularly the Kikuyu people, faced land dispossession and economic exploitation. This led to growing discontent.
- **Mau Mau Uprising (1952-1960):** A militant movement of the Kikuyu people that aimed to end British rule and reclaim land. The British response was brutal, with widespread arrests, killings, and forced relocation.

Role of Jomo Kenyatta:

- **Kenyatta's Leadership**: Jomo Kenyatta, who was a leader of the Kenya African Union (KAU), became the symbol of the nationalist movement. He was arrested by the British in 1952 during the Mau Mau uprising, which further galvanized the push for independence.
- **After Release:** Kenyatta was released in 1961, and he led the negotiation for Kenya's independence.

Independence (1963):

- **Path to Independence:** Through negotiations and after the decline of the Mau Mau movement, Kenya gained independence on December 12, 1963.
- **Jomo Kenyatta became the first president** of the Republic of Kenya, leading the country through a period of nation-building.